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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 December 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. Lintonen ..... (Finland)

Contents

Agenda item 54: Sustainable development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 54: Sustainable development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/C.2/62/L.23/Rev.2)

Draft resolution on agricultural technology for development

1. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.23/Rev.2. The draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

2. **Mr. Fluss** (Israel), in recommending the draft resolution for adoption, announced that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Congo, Eritrea, Monaco, Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Tonga had joined the list of sponsors. The draft resolution marked the culmination of an intensive and constructive process in which like-minded delegations had worked together on an initiative that would significantly bolster development, particularly with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Harnessing the power of agriculture and promoting knowledge and know-how would facilitate efforts to combat poverty and hunger. The broad support for the draft resolution demonstrated the importance of agricultural technology to development and to the work of the United Nations.

3. **The Chairperson** said that a recorded vote had been requested on draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.23/Rev.2.

4. **Mr. Snoussi** (Tunisia), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the Group had sought to deal objectively with the draft resolution and had presented a number of substantive amendments thereto during the informal consultations. All such amendments had been aimed at strengthening the draft resolution and broadening its application to include all aspects of agricultural technology with a view to achieving the United Nations development goals. However, since the amendments proposed had not been satisfactorily taken into account, the Arab Group could not agree with the narrow political goals contained in the present draft resolution. It had therefore requested a recorded vote and would not vote in favour of the draft resolution.

5. The Arab Group was convinced that Israel was interested neither in agriculture nor in the peace process. In that connection, it drew attention to, inter alia: the recent building of 307 new settlement housing units on Palestinian agricultural lands in occupied East Jerusalem; the continuing Israeli occupation of the Shebaa Farms in Lebanon; the systematic destruction of the agricultural sector in the occupied Palestinian territories; the bulldozing of agricultural lands, including the uprooting of a vast number of fruit-bearing trees; and Israeli efforts to prevent the export of Palestinian agricultural produce, especially from the Gaza Strip. It drew particular attention to the recent announcement by the Israeli authorities, only days after the Annapolis Conference, that they would continue to bulldoze agricultural lands in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in order to build Israeli settlements.

6. **Mr. Soetarto** (Indonesia), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that agriculture was a vital sector for long-term sustainable development because of its important contribution to economic development, food security and export earnings for developing countries, including his own. However, the present draft resolution failed to comprehensively address the concerns of developing countries with regard to the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals. Many aspects of agriculture required greater international support and commitments from development partners, particularly the need for agricultural technology transfer. The absence of such an important element had resulted in an unbalanced text. His delegation hoped that such elements would be better reflected in future negotiations. It would therefore abstain from voting on the present draft resolution as a whole.

7. *At the request of the Group of Arab States, a recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.23/Rev.2.**

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

* The delegations of Togo and the Dominican Republic subsequently informed the Committee that they had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Draft resolution A/C.2/62/L.23/Rev. 2 was adopted by 118 votes to none, with 29 abstentions.

8. **Ms. Ferreira** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; and, in addition, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova and Norway, said that agricultural technology for development was an important addition to the work of the Committee in the context of sustainable development. The European Union had therefore actively contributed to the negotiations on the draft resolution, whose text it had helped to shape. The European Union would continue to help foster cooperation and good will among Member States with a view to achieving consensus on that issue in the future.

9. **Mr. Rees** (United States of America) welcomed the positive, open, and intense informal negotiations on the draft resolution. His country supported the current text because it had first-hand experience of developing and harnessing agricultural technology through many of the mechanisms contained in the draft resolution. The United States of America had successful experience in developing effective agricultural research and extension services, improved crop varieties and other innovations which had brought huge benefits to its own consumers.

10. His delegation's strong support for the resolution was also rooted in the growing consensus that developing countries should raise their levels of agricultural productivity as a core development strategy. The United States Agency for International Development was implementing agricultural support and rural development programmes in developing countries around the world. Support for sustainable agriculture was a key component of that Agency's assistance programme. The current resolution also made it very clear that technologies to foster agricultural development should always be welcome, irrespective of the source country.

11. Many developing countries had made tremendous progress in raising the level of technology in their agricultural economies and, in the process, had lifted millions of their citizens out of poverty. One of the key issues agreed upon by the sponsors was that developing countries with successful and technologically intensive agriculture sectors could offer a great deal to other developing countries that had yet to make such progress. The draft resolution just adopted would support those efforts.

12. The draft resolution was a superb example of the type of initiative that could bring substantial benefits to all Member States. It was therefore disappointing that the draft resolution had required a vote, since that might give the impression of a lack of consensus on the important issues at stake. However, since that was not

the case, the Committee should work together to reach a consensus at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. His delegation had also been saddened by the inappropriate injection into the agenda item of political considerations irrelevant to the important development issues addressed by the draft resolution. It was particularly regrettable that the extraneous political discussion had been characterized by a number of inaccurate and inflammatory remarks. Such comments were a mark of disrespect both to the Committee and to the United Nations and they greatly devalued the United Nations development agenda, particularly the importance of raising the level of agricultural technology in developing countries.

13. One important measure of the value of the United Nations was the extent to which it was a place where nations could discuss important differences of opinion in a sincere quest for mutual understanding. Another measure of its value was whether delegations could put aside their differences and work together towards objectives on which they were united. In the future, his delegation looked forward to proceeding with deliberations on such important issues in a spirit of good will and mutual respect.

14. **Mr. Fluss** (Israel) said that appropriate, affordable and sustainable agricultural technologies were known to play an important role in combating poverty and hunger. In adopting the present draft resolution, Member States had demonstrated their collective resolve to make agricultural knowledge and know-how more accessible. The current draft resolution — which has brought together a wide spectrum of sponsors — was in line with calls for action under Agenda 21 and reflected the agenda for the forthcoming cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It would also help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

15. The adoption of the draft resolution also signified a momentous occasion for the Israeli delegation: it was a recognition that Israel could make a substantial and welcome contribution to work of the United Nations. It also demonstrated Israel's desire to engage with Member States, international organizations and the United Nations Secretariat to assist developing countries with their development efforts. Development had always been an issue of tremendous importance to Israel, which had worked for 50 years to advance development by building capacities in countless nations around the world. The present resolution would complement Israel's development agenda and its role on the Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development. In that connection, his delegation also looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on agricultural technology for development, to be issued during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.